The 2015 National Security Strategy: Authorities, Changes, Issues for Congress

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Summary

The Obama Administration released a new National Security Strategy (NSS) on February 6, 2015. It was the second NSS document to be published by the Administration; the first was published in May 2010. The 2015 document states that its purpose is to "set out the principles and priorities to guide the use of American power and influence in the world." The NSS is a congressionally mandated document, originating in the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-433, §603/50 U.S.C §3043).

The 2015 NSS emphasizes the role of U.S. leadership; the words "lead," "leader," "leading," and "leadership" appear 94 times in the context of the U.S. role in the world. It also acknowledges national limitations and calls for strategic patience and persistence.

The 2015 report retains much of the underlying thought of the 2010 version. However, its emphasis appears to shift away from the U.S. role in the world being largely a catalyst for action by international institutions to one that reflects more involved leadership both inside those institutions and between nations.

It also takes a tougher line with both China and with Russia, while emphasizing the desirability for cooperation with both.

The 2015 report raises a number of potential oversight questions for Congress, including the following:

- Does the 2015 NSS accurately identify and properly emphasize key features and trends in the international security environment? Does it adequately address the possibility that since late 2013 a fundamental shift in the international security environment has occurred that suggests a shift from the familiar post-Cold War era to a new and different strategic situation?

- Does the 2015 NSS qualify as a true strategy in terms of linking ends (objectives), means (resources), ways (activities), and in terms of establishing priorities among goals? Is it reasonable to expect the unclassified version of an NSS to do much more than identify general objectives?

- Does the 2015 NSS properly balance objectives against available resources, particularly in the context of the limits on defense spending established in the Budget Control Act of 2011? Are Administration policies and budgets adequately aligned with the 2015 NSS?

- As part of its anticipated review of the Goldwater-Nichols act, how should Congress define its role in shaping national security strategy? Should Congress do this through an independent commission, or in some other way?

- Are NSS statements performing the function that Congress intended? How valuable to Congress are they in terms of supporting oversight of Administration policies and making resource-allocation decisions? Should the mandate that requires the Administration to submit national security strategy reports be repealed or modified? If it should be modified, what modifications should be made?

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Introduction[1]

The National Security Strategy (NSS) is a congressionally mandated document, originating in the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-433, §603/50 U.S.C §3043). Section 3043 appears in the text box below.

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§3043. Annual National Security Strategy Report

(a) Transmittal to Congress

(1) The President shall transmit to Congress each year a comprehensive report on the national security strategy of the United States (hereinafter in this section referred to as a "national security strategy report").

(2) The national security strategy report for any year shall be transmitted on the date on which the President submits to Congress the budget for the next fiscal year under section 1105 of Title 31.

(3) Not later than 150 days after the date on which a new President takes office, the President shall transmit to Congress a national security strategy report under this section. That report shall be in addition to the report for that year transmitted at the time specified in paragraph (2).

(b) Contents

Each national security strategy report shall set forth the national security strategy of the United States and shall include a comprehensive description and discussion of the following:

(1) The worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.

(2) The foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States.

(3) The proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of the national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the goals and objectives referred to in paragraph (1).

(4) The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of the national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.

(5) Such other information as may be necessary to help inform Congress on matters relating to the national security strategy of the United States.

(c) Classified and unclassified form

Each national security strategy report shall be transmitted in both a classified and an unclassified form.

The NSS has been an unclassified document published by the President since the Reagan Administration in 1987. As such, the NSS has tended to highlight broad national security priorities of each Administration, without detailing which priorities were the highest or how, specifically, each priority would be achieved.

Key Points of the 2015 National Security Strategy

The Obama Administration released a new National Security Strategy (NSS) on February 6, 2015.[2] It was the second NSS document to be published by the Obama Administration; the first was published in May 2010. The 2015 document states that its purpose is to "set out the principles and priorities to guide the use of American power and influence in the world."[3]

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[1] Written by Nathan J. Lucas, Section Research Manager, Defense Policy and Arms Control.

[2] The White House, *National Security Strategy,* February 1, 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf.

[3] *National Security Strategy*, p. 1.

The 2015 NSS emphasizes the role of U.S. leadership; the words "lead," "leader," "leading," and "leadership" appear 94 times in the context of the U.S. role in the world. It also acknowledges national limitations and calls for strategic patience and persistence. The introduction notes:

> Today's strategic environment is fluid. Just as the United States helped shape the course of events in the last century, so must we influence their trajectory today by evolving the way we exercise American leadership. This strategy outlines priorities based on a realistic assessment of the risks to our enduring national interests and the opportunities for advancing them. This strategy eschews orienting our entire foreign policy around a single threat or region. It establishes instead a diversified and balanced set of priorities appropriate for the world's leading global power with interests in every part of an increasingly interconnected world.

The 2015 NSS retains much of the underlying thought of the 2010 version. For example, it explicitly restates the list of "enduring national interests" from 2010:

- the security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners;
- a strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity;
- respect for universal values at home and around the world; and
- a rules-based international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.

It also retains a strong emphasis on international institutions.

Changes from the 2010 NSS

Compared with the Obama Administration's first NSS (from 2010), the current document appears to shift emphasis in a number of areas.

The 2010 NSS framed U.S. leadership in the world in terms of "galvanizing collective action," whereas the 2015 document frames U.S. leadership in terms of "leading with strength," "leading by example," "leading with capable partners," "leading with all the instruments of U.S. power," and "leading with a long-term perspective."[4] This appears to be a shift in emphasis away from the U.S. role in the world being largely a catalyst for action by international institutions to more involved leadership both inside those institutions and between nations. Some implications might include a more direct U.S. role in both diplomacy and potential military operations during the remainder of the Obama Administration.

The section devoted to international security in the 2010 NSS could be seen as focused on taking advantage of an improving security situation. The list of subjects in the section could be characterized as completing initiatives and actions already started and beginning a period of relative strategic calm for the United States. Its main points are for the United States to

- strengthen security and resilience at home;
- disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda and its violent extremist affiliates in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and around the world;

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[4] The White House, *National Security Strategy*, May 2010, pp. 1-3, available at http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2010.pdf. Also *National Security Strategy*, February 2015, pp. 2-5.

- reverse the spread of nuclear and biological weapons and secure nuclear materials;
- advance peace, security, and opportunity in the greater Middle East;
- invest in the capacity of strong and capable partners; and
- secure cyberspace.

In the 2015 NSS, the Administration's view of worldwide threats appears to have reflect a more turbulent world, a more challenging environment, and a perceived need for a more significant and direct leadership role for the United States than the 2010 NSS. The 2015 version's main points in this section are for the United States to

- strengthen national defense;
- reinforce homeland security;
- combat the persistent threat of terrorism;
- build capacity to prevent conflict;
- prevent the spread and use of weapons of mass destruction;
- confront climate change;
- ensure access to shared spaces (expanding cyberspace and including outer space and air and maritime security); and
- increase global health security.

One could argue that the points highlighted in the 2015 NSS—strengthening national defense, building capacity, ensuring access to shared spaces, and increasing global health security— envision a more active U.S. role in the world than the main points of the 2010 NSS. On the other hand, one could conclude that these, along with confronting climate change, convey both a wider range of national security challenges in terms of both the nature of the issues as well as geographic scope and the need for using the full array of policy tools.

The 2015 NSS differs from its 2010 predecessor in another area: its explanation of national priorities regarding the international order. The 2015 document lists what it terms the "rebalance" to Asia and the Pacific as its first topic of discussion. This priority is consistent with the 2012 National Strategic Guidance, which outlined the Administration's "shift" to the Pacific region.[5]

The 2010 NSS, in its consideration of the international order, did not emphasize particular regions of the world. Rather, it focused on three themes, which discussed regions in a global context: (1) ensuring strong alliances, (2) building cooperation with other 21st century centers of influence, and (3) sustaining broad cooperation on key global challenges. The 2015 NSS, however, classifies the international order into discrete regional challenges:

- advance the rebalance to Asia and the Pacific;
- strengthen the enduring Alliance with Europe;
- seek stability and peace in the Middle East and North Africa;
- invest in Africa's future; and
- deepen economic and security cooperation in the Americas.

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[5] See CRS Report R42448, *Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" Toward Asia*, coordinated by Mark E. Manyin.

The 2015 NSS also takes a tougher line with both China and with Russia, while emphasizing the desirability for cooperation with both. It says regarding China, "... we will manage competition from a position of strength while insisting that China uphold international rules and norms on issues ranging from maritime security to trade and human rights."[6] On Russia, the document says, "... we will continue to impose significant costs on Russia through sanctions and other means while countering Moscow's deceptive propaganda with the unvarnished truth. We will deter Russian aggression, remain alert to its strategic capabilities, and help our allies and partners resist Russian coercion over the long term, if necessary."[7]

Views on the 2015 NSS

Some analysts have questioned whether, even with the increased emphasis on U.S. leadership, the 2015 NSS sufficiently accounts for the significant changes in strategic threats that have developed since the 2010 NSS. In particular, continued instability in the Middle East and North Africa could be perceived as conflicting with many of the underlying assumptions on worldwide security contained in the 2010 NSS. One critic notes that the 2015 NSS "reads like the drafters believed nothing much had changed, or at least whatever had changed fit rather nicely within the original framework and did not necessitate a changed strategic direction."[8]

On the other hand, others argue that the 2015 NSS contains a coherent philosophy and accurate assessment of the world. One analyst states, "the world of President Obama's National Security Strategy is one in which the United States' economic and military might serve as the bedrock of strong, participatory, and rules-based global institutions. It's smart multilateralism—working within the international system while also being willing to bear the burden of defending it, although not always with military power."[9]

Independent Study of the National Security Strategy Formulation Process

The proposed FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), H.R. 1735, §1604, conference report filed (H.Rept. 114-270) would require DOD to "carry out a comprehensive study of the role of the Department of Defense in the formulation of national security strategy." The study, carried out by an independent research entity, would consider the relationship between the NSS, the National Military Strategy prepared by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the prior Quadrennial Defense Reviews issued by the Secretary of Defense. The study would look at factors that contributed to the development and execution of successful previous strategies, with specific emphasis on

- frequency of strategy updates;
- synchronization of timelines and content;
- prioritization of objectives;
- assignment of roles and responsibilities;
- links between strategy and resourcing;

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[6] *National Security Strategy*, February 2015, p. 24.

[7] *National Security Strategy*, February 2015, p. 25.

[8] Peter D. Feaver, "Grading Obama's National Security Strategy 2.0," *Foreign Policy,* February 6, 2015, available at http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/06/grading-obamas-national-security-strategy-2-0/.

[9] Janine Davidson, "Obama's Last National Security Strategy: The President and the Philosopher," *Foreign Affairs,* March 2, 2015, available at http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/143207/janine-davidson/obamas-last-national-security-strategy, p. 1.

- the implementation of strategy within relevant agencies;
- the value of a competition of ideas; and
- recommendations on best practices and organizational lessons learned.

Issues for Congress[10]

Linking Goals to Resources and Activities

In basic form, a nation's strategy is a decision on how to use national power in all its forms, including but not limited to military power. The classical statement regarding national strategy has been attributed to Carl von Clausewitz, who saw it as the use of armed force or the threat of armed force to achieve military objectives and, in extension, a war's political purpose. Strategic thinkers in the past 50 years have expanded its definition to include the development, intellectual mastery, and utilization of all the nation's resources for the purpose of implementing its policy in war.[11]

Among current strategic planners and thinkers, the concept of a national strategy is the art and science of developing and employing instruments of national power in a coordinated manner to achieve national objectives. A national strategy, in this line of thought, should articulate the "ends" (objectives) while linking them to the "means" (resources) and "ways" (activities). One example is the U.S. military's foundational document on "Doctrine for the Armed Forces," which states, "As a nation, the US wages war employing all instruments of national power—diplomatic, informational, military, and economic. The President employs the Armed Forces of the United States to achieve national strategic objectives."[12] It is this sense of achieving national objectives in conflict that distinguishes "national security strategy" from the broader "national strategy," although the terms are often used interchangeably by many decision-makers, analysts, and pundits.

One may argue that Congress takes a significant role in deciding which means, especially in terms of resources, are to be applied to achieving the national objectives ("ends") laid out in the NSS. From this perspective, an NSS most helpful to Congress would conceivably prioritize sets of national objectives and provide a vision of the activities ("ways") the Administration sees in achieving those ends, as well as explicit links to the current President's budget request for providing necessary resources.

The 2015 NSS articulates an expansive description of threats to U.S. interests and broad goals for achieving objectives across a wide range of areas and domains. As in previous NSS documents, though, it is difficult to discern how the document's stated objectives link to resources and activities.

Congress may wish to consider whether the 2015 NSS qualifies as a true strategy in terms of linking ends to means and ways, as well as in terms of establishing priorities among goals. It may also wish to consider whether the 2015 NSS properly balances objectives against available

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[10] Written by Nathan J. Lucas, Section Research Manager, Defense Policy and Arms Control.

[11] Peter Paret, "Introduction," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 3.

[12] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 1: Doctrine for the Armed Forces,* March 25, 2013, available at http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1.pdf.

resources, particularly in the context of the limits on defense spending established in the Budget Control Act of 2011.

Congressional Role

From 1987 through 2000, a National Security Strategy was submitted every year except in 1989 and 1992. The Reagan Administration submitted two NSS reports, the George H.W. Bush Administration three, and the Clinton Administration submitted seven. The George W. Bush Administration submitted two NSSs—in September 2002 and March 2006. The Obama Administration has submitted two so far, in May 2010 and February 2015. The report has been sent to Congress 16 times since 1987 and, like the QDR, has been criticized by some analysts as having become overly influenced by political, as opposed to strategic, considerations.

Some analysts want Congress to take a greater role in reviewing U.S. national security strategy by directing a complete strategy review, perhaps as part of a retrospective on the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.[13] One option, suggested by some defense analysts, would be to establish an independent commission that would conduct a complex strategic review working from different assumptions about U.S. goals from those in the current NSS.[14]

Another potential role for Congress involves the classification level of the NSS process. Some might argue that a mandate to make the entire NSS process classified could encourage a more frank and reliable exploration of priorities and resources. The mandate contained in Goldwater-Nichols specifies that "each national security strategy report shall be transmitted in both a classified and an unclassified form." Recent Administrations reportedly have not produced a classified NSS.

On the other hand, classifying a major Administration statement on its view of the United States' role in the world would likely limit debate on what the "ends" of the strategy may be and whether Congress should take a greater role in determining those aims.

Does the 2015 NSS Adequately Reflect Recent Developments?

According to some analysts, one difficulty faced by Administrations preparing multiple NSS reports is how to approach subsequent versions. As a public document, there may be a perceived need to emphasize continuity in assumptions and resulting policies. Some analysts have noted that both the George W. Bush Administration's 2006 NSS and the Obama Administration's 2015 NSS were written during times of significant flux in the international security situation, which may call into question the assumptions of each Administration's first NSS. The 2015 NSS reportedly was delayed from 2013 to 2015 because world events kept rendering the latest draft obsolete.[15]

Other analysts have noted that the United States, especially after events in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia from 2013 to the present, may be confronting a fundamentally new international environment for the first time in many years. As stated in another CRS report,

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[13] P.L. 99-433, §603/50 U.S.C §3043.

[14] Colin Clark, "Time for US Strategy Review; then Tackle Goldwater-Nichols," interview with Andrew Krepinevich and Nate Freier, *Breaking Defense*, April 3, 2015, available at http://breakingdefense.com/2015/04/time-for-us-strategy-review-then-tackle-goldwater-nichols/.

[15] Feaver, p. 1.

World events since late 2013 have led some observers to conclude that the international security environment is undergoing a shift from the familiar post-Cold War era of the last 20-25 years, also sometimes known as the unipolar moment (with the United States as the unipolar power), to a new and different strategic situation that features, among other things, renewed great power competition and challenges to elements of the U.S.-led international order that has operated since World War II.[16]

Some observers argue that the 2015 NSS explicitly mentions several major developments in the international security environment that have developed since the 2010 version: Russia's aggression, armed conflict in Syria and Iraq, negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program, instability in North Africa, and infectious disease outbreaks in Africa. Other observers, however, argue that the NSS does not explicitly take into account certain challenges to the underlying assumptions of the 2010 NSS, especially assumptions relating to the efficacy of a rules-based international order during a time of significant uncertainty and change in the fabric of the international order.[17]

Congress may choose to consider whether or not the 2015 NSS accurately and properly emphasizes key features and trends in the current international security environment.

Potential Oversight Questions for Congress

The 2015 NSS raises a number of potential oversight questions for Congress, including the following:

- Does the 2015 NSS accurately identify and properly emphasize key features and trends in the international security environment? Does it adequately address the possibility that since late 2013 there has been a fundamental shift in the international security environment from the familiar post-Cold War era to a new and different strategic situation?

- Does the 2015 NSS qualify as a true strategy in terms of linking ends (objectives) to means (resources) and ways (activities), and in terms of establishing priorities among goals? Is it reasonable to expect the unclassified version of an NSS to do much more than identify general objectives?

- Does the 2015 NSS properly balance objectives against available resources, particularly in the context of the limits on defense spending established in the Budget Control Act of 2011? Are Administration policies and budgets adequately aligned with the 2015 NSS? Does the NSS establish—or does Congress otherwise have—adequate metrics for evaluating whether the strategy is being properly implemented, and whether it is achieving its stated objectives?

- The law mandating national security strategy reports directs that they be submitted annually. Why was there a five-year interval between the 2010 NSS and 2015 NSS documents? Should flux in the international security environment be a reason to expand the interval between NSS documents, or conversely, a reason to issue them more frequently?

- The law mandating national security strategy reports directs that they be submitted in both classified and unclassified form. Was the 2015 NSS submitted

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[16] CRS Report R43838, *A Shift in the International Security Environment: Potential Implications for Defense—Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke, Summary.

[17] See Feaver, p. 5.

in classified form? If not, why not? How useful to Congress is the NSS if it is issued in unclassified form only?

- As part of its review of the Goldwater-Nichols act, should Congress undertake a review of national security strategy? If so, should Congress do this through an independent commission, or in some other way?

- Are NSS statements functioning in the way that Congress intended? How valuable to Congress are they in terms of supporting oversight of Administration policies and making resource-allocation decisions? Should the mandate that requires the Administration to submit national security strategy reports be repealed or modified? If it should be modified, what modifications should be made?

- Is the list of required reports supporting the NSS too long or redundant?

While this list of questions is aimed at congressional oversight, Congress may also consider issues associated with the 2015 NSS legislatively as part of the debate over the National Defense Authorization Act.

Appendix A. Strategic Reviews and Reports with Statutory Requirements[18]

National Security Strategy (NSS)

NSS documents are issued by the President and pertain to the U.S. government as a whole.

Requirement. The NSS was initially required by the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (Goldwater-Nichols Act), P.L. 99-433, §603, and is codified in Title 50, *U.S. Code* §3043.

Contents of the mandate. The NSS is a report "on the national security strategy of the United States" from the President to Congress. It is required to be submitted annually on the date the President submits his annual budget request, and in addition not more than 150 days from the date a new President takes office. It must be submitted in both classified and unclassified forms. The report must address U.S. interests, goals and objectives; the policies, worldwide commitments, and capabilities required to meet those objectives; the use of elements of national power to achieve those goals; and it must provide an assessment of associated risk.[19]

Execution. From 1987 through 2000, an NSS was submitted every year except in 1989 and 1992, though on various dates. The George W. Bush Administration submitted two NSSs—in September 2002 and in March 2006. The Obama Administration has submitted two so far, in May 2010 and February 2015. As a rule, recent NSS reports have described objectives and activities designed to meet those objectives; they have not as a rule directly tackled "risk"—defined by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as "the potential impact upon the United States—to include our population, territory, and interests—of current and contingency events given their estimated consequences and probabilities."[20] NSSs to date have been resource-unconstrained. They have not typically prioritized among the objectives they describe, or delineated responsibilities across agencies of the U.S. government—nor are they required to do so.[21]

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[18] Written by Kathleen McInnis, Analyst in International Security, and based on work by Catherine Dale, then CRS Specialist in International Security, CRS Report R43174, *National Security Strategy: Mandates, Execution to Date, and Issues for Congress*, August 6, 2013.

[19] Specifically, each NSS report is required to include "a comprehensive description and discussion of the following": "(1) The worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States. (2) The foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States. (3) The proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of the national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the goals and objectives referred to in paragraph (1). (4) The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of the national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy. (5) Such other information as may be necessary to help inform Congress on matters relating to the national security strategy of the United States." See Title 50, *U.S. Code*, §3043(b).

[20] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "CJCSI 3100.01B: Joint Strategic Planning System," December 12, 2008, p. GL-7, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cjcs_directives/cdata/unlimit/3100_01.pdf.

[21] For example, under President George H.W. Bush, the 2002 NSS described the global strategic context, named broad goals ("political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity"), and described eight broad areas of effort designed to meet those goals. For each area, the NSS listed subset initiatives. But the NSS did not describe how those subset initiatives were to be achieved, and it did not assign responsibility for achieving them to specific agencies. Neither the eight major areas, nor the subset initiatives within each area, were (continued...)

National Intelligence Strategy[22]

Requirement. The Intelligence Authorization Act for FY2015 (P.L. 113-463, Title 50, U.S.C. §3043a) required, for the first time, that the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) prepare a comprehensive National Intelligence Strategy (NIS) to meet national security objectives for the following four-year period, or beyond if appropriate. The NIS must be prepared every four years, beginning in 2017. In part, this requirement codifies an existing practice; the DNI has been producing a NIS since 2005,[23] but the statute contains specific requirements.

Contents of the Mandate. By statute, the NIS must be consistent with the most recent national security strategy, as well as the strategic plans of other relevant U.S. departments and agencies and any other relevant national-level plans. The NIS must also

1. address matters related to national and military intelligence, including counterintelligence;

2. identify the major national security missions that the intelligence community is currently pursuing and will pursue in the future to meet the anticipated security environment;

3. describe how the intelligence community will utilize personnel, technology, partnerships, and other capabilities to pursue the major national security missions identified in paragraph (2);

4. assess current, emerging, and future threats to the intelligence community, including threats from foreign intelligence and security services and insider threats;

5. outline the organizational roles and missions of the elements of the intelligence community as part of an integrated enterprise to meet customer demands for intelligence products, services, and support;

6. identify sources of strategic, institutional, programmatic, fiscal, and technological risk; and

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(...continued)

prioritized. See President George W. Bush, The National Security Strategy of the United States, September 2002, available at http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/. The 2006 NSS maintained the same basic format and content as the 2002 NSS, though it added an additional area of effort ("challenges and opportunities of globalization") for a total of nine, and it included, in each area, a discussion of "successes" since 2002. See President George W. Bush, The National Security Strategy of the United States, March 2006, available at http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2006/index.html. Under President Barack Obama, the 2010 NSS began by identifying four "enduring interests": "the security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. Allies and partners; a strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity; respect for universal values at home and around the world; and an international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges". For each of those interests, the NSS named between three and six objectives, and for each objective, a number of sub-objectives. While it loosely prioritized among interests—"this Administration has no greater responsibility than the safety and security of the American people," see p.4—it did not prioritize among objectives. While it included a three-page discussion of the importance of whole-of-government approaches, see pp. 14-16, and broadly described a division of labor among agencies, it did not assign roles and responsibilities for accomplishing named objectives. See President Barack Obama, National Security Strategy, May 2010, available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

[22] For more information, see CRS Report R43793, *Intelligence Authorization Legislation for FY2014 and FY2015: Provisions, Status, Intelligence Community Framework*, by Anne Daugherty Miles For further information on the NIS or other intelligence related matters, contact CRS analyst Anne Miles.

[23] See **Appendix B** for more details.

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7. analyze factors that may affect the intelligence community's performance in pursuing the major national security missions identified in paragraph (2) during the following 10-year period.[24]

The mandate further states that the Director of National Intelligence shall submit a report on the congressional intelligence committees not later than 45 days after the date of the completion of such strategy. Although there is no specified classification level for the report in legislation, due to the sensitivity of the topics required by the report, it is likely to be classified.

Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)/Defense Strategy Review

Quadrennial defense reviews, required by law, are internal DOD processes designed to formulate national defense strategy and to determine the policies, approaches, and organization required to achieve that strategy, in broad support of national security strategy.[25] The mandate for the QDR was changed in the FY2015 NDAA, P.L. 113-291, which, among other things, renamed it the "Defense Strategy Review." The change amended Title 10, *U.S. Code*, §118, and is effective October 1, 2015.

The "Bottom-Up Review" to the Defense Strategy Review

Requirement. At the end of the Cold War, the Department of Defense conducted a number of strategy reviews intended to assess the Department's plans and priorities in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall and subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union. The first "Base Force" review was mandated by then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell and presented in 1991. It was intended to help shift the Pentagon away from planning for a global war with the Soviet Union toward a strategy that focused more on regional threats and forward presence.[26] The second one, the "Bottom-Up Review," was initiated by Les Aspin in March 1993, as a response to the continually evolving security environment after the collapse of the Soviet Union and in the wake of the first Gulf War. As such, it served as a comprehensive review of the nation's defense strategy, force structure, modernization, infrastructure, and foundations from the ground up.[27] In 1997, Congress mandated a one-time Defense Review, which was intended to provide for a strategy-based, balanced, and affordable defense program. It also established a panel of senior defense experts to provide an external review of the QDR team. The requirement for the QDR was made permanent in the 2000 National Defense Authorization Act by amending Title 10, *U.S. Code*, §118, which directed that the QDR be conducted during the first year of each administration. QDRs were subsequently conducted in 2001, 2006, 2010 and 2014, and have become a regular mechanism through which DOD leadership reviews its plans and priorities and reports them to Congress.

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[24] 50 U.S.C. §3043a.

[25] The QDR itself is a review process, while the QDR report is a written product produced by that process.

[26] Eric V. Larson, David T. Orletsky & Kristin J. Leuschner, "Defense Planning in a Decade of Change: Lessons from the Base Force, the Bottom-Up Review, and the Quadrennial Defense Review," The Rand Corporation. Available at http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1387.html.

[27] Les Aspin, "Report on the Bottom-Up Review," Department of Defense, October 1993. Available at http://www.dtic.mil.

In 2014, the House Armed Services Committee registered its concern with the QDR, noting that it "has grown less compliant with the law over time and strayed further from the intent of Congress."[28] The Committee Report goes on to note:

> The committee believes the QDR should provide a mechanism for setting the priorities of the Department of Defense, shaping the force, guiding capabilities and resources, and adjusting the organization to respond to changes in the strategic environment. In addition, it should assist Congress in better understanding the relationships and tradeoffs between missions, risks, and resources, particularly in light of geopolitical changes and domestic developments in the last few years.[29]

Accordingly, in the FY2015 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress significantly augmented the statutory requirements associated with these quadrennial strategy reviews.

Current DSR Mandate. Section 1072 of P.L. 113-291 (FY2015 NDAA) amended elements of Title 10, *U.S. Code*, Section 153 pertaining to the QDR. In the first instance, it changed the title of the review process to the "Defense Strategy Review" (DSR) and reformed the process in several ways, particularly by requiring that the DSR explore the Department's priorities, risks, and strategic tradeoffs with more specificity than previous legislation mandated. While the DSR still mandates that the Department assess whether U.S. force structure and posture is appropriate to meet military needs, it requires a more in-depth assessment and articulation of defense strategy itself than prior reviews. Other noteworthy differences include the following:

- **Timeframes:** It changes the strategic outlook for the Review from 20 years to considering three general timeframes: near-term (associated with the future-years defense program), mid-term (10 to 15 years), and far-term (20 years).

- **Linkage with other assessments:** In its assessment of threats, risks, opportunities, and challenges, it requires the Department of Defense to link the Review to other documents produced within the national security establishment. In particular, it specifies that the DSR utilize risk assessments from the Chairman, using the most recent net assessment submitted by the Secretary of Defense under Section 113, the risk assessment submitted by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Section 153, and, as determined necessary or useful by the Secretary, any other Department of Defense, government, or non-government strategic or intelligence estimate.

- **Risk assessments:** In its assessment of the force structure necessary to accomplish stated priorities, it requires the Department of Defense to "define the nature and magnitude of the strategic and military risks associated with executing such national defense strategy; and understand the relationships and tradeoffs between missions, risks, and resources." The DSR also requires the Department to articulate the way in which it categorizes and measures risk, as well as develop a plan for mitigating those identified risks.

- **Integration with non-DOD agencies and allies:** The DSR requires that the Department of Defense express its assumptions about what interagency and multinational partners will contribute to its operations.

- **Budgets:** Whereas the QDR mandate required DOD make recommendations fully independent to the Department's budget submission to Congress, the DSR

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[28] Section 1077 of H.Rept. 113-446, Part 1 – 113th Congress (2013-2014), May 13, 2014.

[29] Ibid.

mandates that, to the extent practical, DOD estimate the budget level sufficient to execute identified missions.

- **Chairman's assessment:** The QDR required the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) to review the QDR and conduct a risk assessment that defined the nature and magnitude of political, strategic, and military risks associated with conducting QDR missions. By contrast, the DSR transforms the Chairman's review to include not only risks, but also a description of capabilities needed to address such risks. This is in addition to the Chairman's Risk Assessment report, described below.

- **National Defense Strategy (NDS):** Contrary to the mandate of the Quadrennial Defense Review, which requires that the QDR report to Congress discuss the results of the review, the DSR report to Congress requires the Department to actually state the national defense strategy of the United States. The FY2015 NDAA, in amending the QDR statute, requires DOD to incorporate the NDS as part of the DSR report. Prior to this legislation, the National Defense Strategy was intermittently produced, either incorporated in the QDR or disseminated as a stand-alone "capstone" defense planning document. The National Defense Strategy was not mandated by legislation. P.L. 113-291 (FY2015 NDAA) further specifies that the Department articulate its assumed strategic environment, steady state activities versus crisis and conflict scenarios, as well as produce a prioritized list of significant shortfalls in force size and structure.

- **Report submission timeframes:** The DSR is to be submitted to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees no later than March 1 of the year following the year in which the review itself is conducted. Should the DSR be conducted during the second term of an administration, the DSR may be an update of the DSR conducted during the first term. The DSR report is to be unclassified, although there can be a classified annex.

The first DSR will also include an analysis of those enduring mission requirements for equipping, training, sustaining, and other operation and maintenance activities of DOD that are financed using monies allocated for overseas contingency operations.

National Defense Panel (NDP)

Many practitioners and observers have suggested the value of a competition of ideas to spur the rigor and creativity of any strategic review process. Such a competition may be internal or external—aimed respectively at improving the process itself or at fostering a robust debate that weighs the findings of the process against alternatives. The current NDP requirement is the most recent expression of congressional interest in fostering a competition of ideas associated with the Quadrennial Defense Strategy process.

Requirement. The current mandate for the NDP can be found in Section 1072 of the FY2015 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 113-291, which amended Title 10, *U.S. Code*, §118(f). According to law, the Secretary of Defense must establish an independent advisory committee, comprising 10 private civilians who are recognized national security experts as part of the DSR process. This is not unprecedented; the first requirement for such a panel was a one-time mandate for the 1997 QDR report. The National Defense Panel subsequently became a permanent requirement after the 2006 QDR process in the John Warner NDAA for FY2007, P.L. 109-364, which stated that the independent panel must conduct an "assessment of the [QDR] review, including the recommendations of the review, the stated and implied assumptions incorporated in

the review, and the vulnerabilities of the strategy and force structure underlying the review." Substantively, the panel was required to review the Secretary's terms of reference; assess the assumptions, strategy findings, and risks in the QDR report; conduct an independent assessment of possible force structures; and compare resource requirements for alternative force structures and the QDR's budget plan. In essence, the National Defense Panel under the QDR construct served as an audit mechanism. The most current NDP was published in July 2014, to support the 2014 QDR.[30]

Future NDPs. Much like the DSR, the National Defense Panel articulated in the FY2015 NDAA articulates a more expansive, strategy-driven mandate, while requiring the panel itself to address a more detailed set of questions. By contrast to the QDR, the DSR panel must continue in its role as auditors of the defense strategy role, while also producing its own, mini-DSR concurrent with the broader DOD review. Panel duties include assessing the current and future security environment; suggesting key issues for the DSR; identifying and discussing the national security interests of the United States and the role of the Armed Forces in promoting them; assessing the assumptions and findings of the DSR; considering alternative defense strategies; and assessing force structure, capabilities, posture, infrastructure, readiness, organization, budget plans, and other elements necessary to execute missions identified in the DSR.

The panel must submit its report to Congress no later than three months after the Department of Defense submits the DSR.

National Military Strategy (NMS)

Requirement. In general, national military strategy concerns the organized application of military means in support of broader national (political) goals.[31] The requirement for a National Military Strategy dates back to the 1990s. Section 302 of the NDAA for FY1991, P.L. 101-510, required the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to submit to the Secretary of Defense a strategic military plan by the first day of each calendar year from 1991 through 1993. Each plan was to take a 10-year outlook and address threats; the degree to which military forces could contribute to the achievement of national objectives; the strategic military plan for applying forces; ensuing risks to the United States and its allies; the organization and structure of military forces to implement strategy; the functions for the military departments in organizing, training, and equipping for combatant commanders; and major weapons and equipment acquisitions in order of priority. CJCS was further required to test these assumptions against three alternative fiscal scenarios. After the expiration of that mandate, CJCS issued unclassified NMSs in 1995 and 1997. The FY2004 NDAA, P.L. 108-136, §903, made the NMS a permanent requirement, to be issued every two years.

As the NMS was conceptualized in 2004, CJCS was required to include a description of the strategic environment, threats to the United States and its allies, an identification of national military objectives and how they relate to the strategic environment, the strategy to achieve the military objectives, and an assessment of the capabilities and adequacy of both U.S. forces and regional allies and partners. In the FY2011 NDAA, the Chairman was instructed to include an "assessment of the requirements for contractor support of the armed forces in conducting

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[30] National Defense Panel, *Ensuring a Strong U.S. Defense for the Future: The National Defense Panel Review of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review*, July 31, 2014, available at http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Ensuring-a-Strong-U.S.-Defense-for-the-Future-NDP-Review-of-the-QDR_0.pdf.

[31] English military theorist Liddell Hart famously described military strategy as "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy." See Liddell Hart, B.H., *Strategy*, London: Faber, 1967, p. 321.

peacetime training, peacekeeping, overseas contingency operations, and major combat operations, and the risks associated with such support."[32]

The most recent NMS was published in June 2015.[33]

Current NMS Mandate. Significant changes to the substance of the NMS occurred in the FY2013 NDAA, which sought to "consolidate and clarify" the NMS requirement and, as with the DSR, added a degree of specificity to the questions the document is to explore.[34] Each NMS is required to

- articulate how the U.S. military will help achieve objectives outlined in the National Security Strategy, Defense Strategy Review, and the Secretary of Defense's annual report to Congress;

- include a description of the strategic environment, challenges, and opportunities the United States faces; international, regional, transnational, hybrid, terrorist, cyber, asymmetric, and weapons of mass destruction threats (along with others the Chairman identifies);

- include the implications of force planning and sizing for the strategy; the capability, capacity, and availability of U.S. forces to achieve identified missions;

- identify areas wherein U.S. forces seek to synchronize with interagency and multinational partners and areas in which the U.S. military may be augmented by other coalition partners and organizations (such as NATO);

- identify requirements for operational contractor support; and

- state all the assumptions leading to the conclusions derived in the above assessments.

Chairman's Risk Assessment (CRA)

Formal strategy-making and planning include, by definition, a consideration of risk. Statute requires that CJCS regularly assess the risks associated with the most recently issued NMS (or update), including defining the strategic and military risks associated with the NMS, as well as the intellectual framework CJCS utilized to define those risks. In providing the Joint Staff and the Military Services with guidance in drafting the CRA, the CJCS has defined two types of risk associated with this assessment:

- Military Risk: The ability of the U.S. Armed Forces to adequately resource and execute military operations in support of the strategic objectives of the National Military Strategy.

- Strategic Risk: The potential impact upon the United States—to include our population, territory, and interests—of current and contingency events given their estimated consequences and probabilities.[35]

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[32] See P.L. 111-383, §942, Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for FY2011, as well as Title X, §153, *U.S. Code* (2011), http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2011-title10/html/USCODE-2011-title10-subtitleA-partI-chap5-sec153.htm.

[33] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015: The United States Military's Contribution to National Security*, June 2015. Available at http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/2015_National_Military_Strategy.pdf.

[34] H.Rept. 112-706, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, December 8, 2012, p. 838.

[35] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "CJCSI 3100.01B: Joint Strategic Planning System," December 12, 2008, p. (continued...)

Mandate. According to Title 10, *U.S. Code*, §153(b), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is required annually to assess the risks associated with accomplishing the National Military Strategy. This requirement was introduced in the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act, which specified that the Chairman was to "submit to the Secretary of Defense a report providing the Chairman's assessment of the nature and magnitude of the strategic and military risks associated with executing the missions called for under the current National Military Strategy."

Current CRA Requirement. Much like the National Military Strategy, the FY2013 NDAA significantly expanded the scope and specificity of the Chairman's Risk Assessment. In the first instance, the Risk Assessment became an annual versus bi-annual requirement. In terms of substance, the revised CRA mandate now requires the Chairman to examine[36]

- updates on any changes to the strategic environment;
- an identification and definition of the strategic risks to U.S. interest and military risks in executing the NMS;
- an identification and definition of differing levels of risks that distinguishes between the concepts of probability and consequences, as well as a definition of what "significant" means in the view of the Chairman;
- an identification and assessment of risk in the NMS by category and level and the ways in which the risk might manifest and whether it is projected to increase or decrease over time;
- a determination of what levels and kinds of risk are a result of budgetary priorities or tradeoffs and fiscal constraints;
- an identification of risks that the military assumes when partnering with interagency or allied partners and contractors; and
- an identification and assessment of the critical deficiencies in force capabilities identified during reviews of contingency plans by the unified combatant commands, and what those deficiencies will mean for the execution of the NMS.

As statutory requirements regarding CRA submission timelines were adjusted several times during the past decade, DOD has submitted CRAs to Congress frequently, if not always in compliance with the current mandate at the time. The most recent CRA was submitted in February 2015. All have been submitted in classified format, although the legislation does not specify a classification level. In substance, CRAs have defined the statutory categories of strategic and military risk in somewhat varied ways, with some apparent impact on the issues selected for inclusion.

Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review (QRM)

The origins of the now obsolete QRM are in the Goldwater-Nichols Act, Section 201, which amended Chapter 5 of Title 10, *U.S. Code*, §153(b). The Chairman was to provide the Secretary of Defense a report on the assignment of roles and missions to the armed forces, to be produced no less than once every three years, or at the request of the President or the Secretary. It was to take into account threats, changes in technology, and the need to prevent unnecessary duplication of effort. There was no requirement to report this to Congress. The NDAA for FY2001, P.L. 107-

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GL-7, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cjcs_directives/cdata/unlimit/3100_01.pdf.

[36] P.L. 112-239, §952(b)(2).

107, preserved the premise that CJCS should assess roles and missions but made that responsibility part of the Chairman's assessment of the QDR, therefore making the assessment quadrennial and mandating that the results be reported to Congress.

In preparing the QRM, the Chairman was instructed to examine[37]

- the core mission areas of the armed forces;
- the core competencies and capabilities that are associated with the performance or support of a core mission area;
- the elements of the Department of Defense that are responsible for providing the core competencies and capabilities required to effectively perform the core missions identified pursuant to paragraph;
- any gaps in the ability of the elements (or other office, agency activity, or command) of the Department of Defense to provide core competencies and capabilities required to effectively perform the core missions; and
- any unnecessary duplication of core competencies and capabilities between defense components.

The QRM was repealed in P.L. 113-291, §1072(b) (FY2015 NDAA).[38]

Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR)

The U.S. government's homeland security architecture was created in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The QHSR ("kisser" in common parlance), modeled explicitly on DOD's QDR, was part of that set of changes.

Requirement. The permanent mandate for a QHSR was introduced by §2401 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, P.L. 110-53, §2401, which amended Title VII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, P.L. 107-296, adding §707. The requirement is codified at Title 6, *U.S. Code*, §347.

Contents of the mandate. Statute requires that every four years, beginning in FY2009, the Secretary of Homeland Security conduct a "review of the homeland security of the nation." The review must be conducted in consultation with a number of specified governmental and nongovernmental agencies.[39] The review must delineate a national homeland security strategy; outline and prioritize missions; describe interagency cooperation and preparedness; identify the budget plan required; assess organizational alignment; and assess the procedures of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for acquisition and expenditure.[40] The legislation does

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[37] See P.L. 112-239, div. E, title IX, §952.

[38] See P.L. §113-291, 118 (b). Available at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ291/html/PLAW-113publ291.htm.

[39] Specifically, these include "the heads of other Federal agencies, including the Attorney General, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Director of National Intelligence; key officials of the Department of Homeland Security; and other relevant governmental and nongovernmental entities, including state, local, and tribal government officials, Members of Congress, private sector representatives, academics, and other policy experts." See Title 6, *U.S. Code*, §347(a)(3).

[40] Specifically, in each review, the Secretary of Homeland Security is required to "(1) delineate and update, as appropriate, the national homeland security strategy, consistent with appropriate national and Department strategies, strategic plans, and Homeland Security Presidential Directives, including the National Strategy for Homeland Security, the National Response Plan, and the Department Security Strategic Plan; (2) outline and prioritize the full range of the (continued...)

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not specifically require the QHSR to be consistent with the current National Security Strategy, but the requirement for consistency with "appropriate national and Department strategies" might be understood to include the NSS. The legislation does require, however, that the QHSR be consistent with the National Strategy for Homeland Security.[41] The Secretary must submit a report based on the review to Congress by December 31 of the year in which the QHSR is conducted. The report is to be unclassified, and DHS is further instructed to make the report publicly available on its website.

Execution. Two QHSR reports have been required. The first QHSR report, submitted to Congress in 2010, included a striking disclaimer up front: "The report is not a resource prioritization document, although in identifying key mission areas for priority focus, it is highly indicative of where those priorities should lie. Nor does the QHSR detail the roles and responsibilities of Federal or other institutions for each mission area."[42] The most recent QHSR was submitted in June 2014.[43]

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critical homeland security mission areas of the Nation; (3) describe the interagency cooperation, preparedness of Federal response assets, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the homeland security program and policies of the Nation associated with the national homeland security strategy, required to execute successfully the full range of missions called for in the national homeland security strategy described in paragraph (1) and the homeland security mission areas outlined under paragraph (2); (4) identify the budget plan required to provide sufficient resources to successfully execute the full range of missions called for in the national homeland security strategy described in paragraph (1) and the homeland security mission areas outlined under paragraph (2); (5) include an assessment of the organizational alignment of the Department with the national homeland security strategy referred to in paragraph (1) and the homeland security mission areas outlined under paragraph (2); and (6) review and assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms of the Department for executing the process of turning the requirements developed in the quadrennial homeland security review into an acquisition strategy and expenditure plan within the Department." See Title 6, *U.S. Code*, §347(b).

[41] The legislative intent of §347(b)(1), which requires that the QHSR "delineate and update, as appropriate, the national homeland security strategy, consistent with ... the National Strategy for Homeland Security," may not be wholly apparent. There is no separate statutory mandate for a national strategy for homeland security. However, in practice, after President George W. Bush created the Office of Homeland Security at the White House, in October 2001, he directed it, as its first responsibility, to craft a strategy. The Office issued the first National Strategy for Homeland Security in July 2002; that strategy outlined broad strategic objectives and threats, and proposed specific initiatives to meet those threats in six "critical mission areas." See Office of Homeland Security, National Strategy for Homeland Security, July 2002, available at http://www.ncs.gov/library/policy_docs/nat_strat_hls.pdf. A subsequent strategy was issued by the Homeland Security Council in October 2007, which addressed the same broad areas as its 2002 predecessor—national objectives, threats, and initiatives. It noted that it "complemented" other major strategic documents including the March 2006 NSS. See Homeland Security Council, National Strategy for Homeland Security, October 2007, available at http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/nat_strat_homelandsecurity_2007.pdf. The Homeland Security Council (HSC) was created by President George W. Bush with Executive Order 13228, of October 8, 2001, and its organization and operations were specified initially by Homeland Security Presidential Directive 1, of October 29, 2001. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 codified the organization and responsibilities of the HSC, and it also created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The act did not establish a formal requirement for a homeland security strategy, but it did direct the HSC to "assess the objectives, commitments, and risks of the United States in the interest of homeland security and to make resulting recommendations to the President; [and to] oversee and review homeland security policies of the Federal Government and to make resulting recommendations to the President." See Homeland Security Act of 2002, November 25, 2002, P.L. 107-296 §904.

[42] Department of Homeland Security, Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report: A Strategic Framework for a Security Homeland, February 2010, p.vi, available at http://www.dhs.gov/quadrennial-homeland-security-review-qhsr.

[43] Department of Homeland Security, "The 2014 Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report," June 18, 2014, available at http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2014-qhsr-final-508.pdf.

Appendix B. Selected Strategic Reviews and Reports Without Statutory Requirements[44]

Departments, agencies, and the executive branch as a whole may conduct strategic reviews and craft strategic guidance apart from any congressional mandate. Such efforts have the potential to contribute constructively to U.S. national security efforts, but they may, however, raise questions for Congress concerning whether and how to provide oversight.

Department of Defense Comprehensive Review

DOD's 2011 comprehensive review was reportedly driven by both strategic and budgetary imperatives. Falling under the auspices of two consecutive Secretaries of Defense, Robert Gates and Leon Panetta, the review went by several different names rather than a single acronym.

- **Requirement:** While DOD's 2011 comprehensive review had no explicit statutory mandate, executive and legislative branch actions variously prompted or catalyzed the conduct of the review. In April 2011, President Obama directed DOD to identify $400 billion in "additional savings" in the defense budget, as part of a broader effort to achieve $4 trillion in deficit reduction over 12 years.[45] DOD's efforts to comply with that guidance received an additional jumpstart from the enactment, in August 2011, of the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA), P.L. 112-25, which established topline budget caps.[46]

- **Contents of the mandate:** The mandate for the comprehensive review explicitly included strategy as well as resources. President Obama indicated from the outset that the search for savings should be driven by strategic considerations, calling for "a fundamental review of America's missions, capabilities, and our role in a changing world."[47] In May 2011, then-Secretary of Defense Gates, accepting the assignment from the President, stressed that DOD's review would help "ensure that future spending decisions are focused on priorities, strategy, and risks, and are not simply a math and accounting exercise."[48] And in August 2011, new

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[44] Written by Catherine Dale, then CRS Specialist in International Security, and excerpted from CRS Report R43174, *National Security Strategy: Mandates, Execution to Date, and Issues for Congress*.

[45] President Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on Fiscal Policy," The George Washington University, Washington, DC, April 13, 2011, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/13/remarks-president-fiscal-policy.

[46] See the Budget Control Act of 2011, P.L. 112-25, §101 and §302, which amended §251 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, P.L. 99-177. DOD efforts to meet the presidential and the BCA targets were preceded by a relatively rigorous internal effort to reduce overhead launched by Secretary Gates in spring 2010. The results of that "efficiencies" scrub were announced on January 6, 2011, and then reflected in the defense budget request for FY2012. They included $100 billion in savings over the FYDP identified by military services, which services were allowed to keep and reinvest in priority programs; and $78 billion in DOD-wide savings over the FYDP, which DOD stated that it would use to accommodate a lower budget topline. It should be noted that there may be a difference between "savings identified in advance" and "savings realized." See Office of the USD (Comptroller), United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Request, Overview, February 2011, paragraph 5-1.

[47] See President Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on Fiscal Policy," The George Washington University, Washington, DC, April 13, 2011, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/13/remarks-president-fiscal-policy.

[48] Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Remarks at the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC, May 24, 2011, available at http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1570. He warned against identifying savings by (continued...)

Secretary of Defense Panetta confirmed that DOD was implementing the President's April guidance by conducting a "fundamental review." He added that key questions in the review included "What are the essential missions our military must do to protect America and our way of life? What are the risks of the strategic choices we make? What are the financial costs?"[49]

- **Execution:** Publicly and privately, DOD officials confirmed that based on the President's guidance, DOD launched a robust, senior-level review process that gave some consideration to strategic imperatives and involved iterative engagement with the White House. According to DOD officials, the results were manifested in the January 2012 DSG and in the defense budget request for FY2013.[50]

Department of Defense Strategic Choices and Management Review (SCMR)

The SCMR ("skimmer" in common parlance), like the comprehensive review, was an internally driven exercise nominally concerned with both strategy and resourcing.

- **Requirement:** The SCMR had no external mandate. Instead, it was conducted based on direction given by new Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in March 2013, not long after he assumed office.[51]

- **Contents of the mandate:** Secretary Hagel assigned responsibility for the conduct of the SCMR to Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, in coordination with the Joint Staff, and established a deadline for completion of May 31, 2013. OSD CAPE (Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation) was given day-to-day management responsibility for the effort, and the process, like recent QDR processes, was designed to be participatory. A number of participants later suggested that the SCMR was fundamentally budget-driven—designed to examine, in Deputy Secretary Carter's words, "every nickel" that DOD spends. DOD officials indicated that the review would be used to inform revisions to the FY2014 defense request should sequestration continue; to inform the fiscal guidance given to military services as they build their FY2015 and associated five-year budget plans; and to serve as the anchor for the 2014 QDR process. According to DOD officials, the SCMR considered three potential budget scenarios: the President's FY2014 budget, the BCA's sequester-level topline caps, and an "in-between" scenario. The review examined three substantive areas—management efficiencies and overhead reductions, compensation reforms, and changes to force structure and modernization plans. In the force structure and

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simply "taking a percentage off the top of everything"—in his words, "salami-slicing"—because that approach would result in "a hollowing-out of the force."

[49] Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, *Meeting Our Fiscal and National Security Responsibility*, August 3, 2011, available at http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0711_message1/.

[50] See Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Priorities and Choices*, January 2012, available at http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Budget_Priorities.pdf.

[51] Interviews with DOD officials, 2013, and see Jim Garamone, *Hagel Tasks Civilian, Military Leaders to Examine Strategy*, American Forces Press Service, March 18, 2013.

modernization arena, the SCMR considered the two sides of a core trade-off, between the size of the force and high-end technology.[52]

- **Execution:** DOD concluded the SCMR on schedule, briefed the results to President Obama, and then briefed the major conclusions to Congress and also to the public. DOD officials noted that the SCMR took the 2012 DSG as its baseline. Yet the tenor of the July 31 roll-out and associated discussions underscored that the primary focus of the review was budgetary—"the purpose" of the SCMR "was to understand the impact of further budget reductions on the Department, and develop options to deal with these additional cuts." The SCMR concluded that even the most drastic options under consideration in all three categories—efficiencies, compensation, and force structure/modernization— could help DOD meet sequester-level topline caps only toward the end of the BCA's 10-year application. DOD officials stressed that the SCMR generated ideas not decisions—it would be the 2014 QDR process, they argued, that would help DOD make tough strategic choices, and those choices would require, as a prerequisite, further clarity about fiscal constraints. Some DOD officials and outside observers have suggested that at some unspecified point of increased austerity, it becomes time to reconsider both the most fundamental aims that defense strategy seeks to realize, and the role that the U.S. intends to play on the world stage.[53]

Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR)

In 2010, the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development issued the first—and to date only—QDDR report, based on a robust internal review process that broadly echoed the QDR process.

- **Requirement:** There was no external mandate for the QDDR. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton directed the State Department to conduct the review.

- **Contents of the mandate:** The QDDR process was explicitly based on the QDR and the QHSR. It was designed to consider priorities, resourcing, and organization.

- **Execution:** The QDDR report was issued in December 2010 as an unclassified public document. It explicitly proposed a reform agenda, calling for specific changes in both the focus and the organizational structure of the State Department. The QDDR report described the 2010 NSS as an overall "blueprint,"

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[52] Interviews with DOD officials. See Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, "Defense Priorities in an Era of Constrained Budgets," remarks to Annual Conference, Center for a New American Security, June 12, 2013, available at http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5256; Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention, Louisville, KY, July 22, 2013, available at http://www.defense.gov/ speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1796; DOD press briefing by Secretary Hagel and Admiral Winnefeld, Washington, DC, July 31, 2013, available at http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5280; Defense Department Background Briefing on the Strategic Choices and Management Review, Washington, DC, July 31, 2013, available at http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5282; and Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff James A. Winnefeld, Jr. Prepared Testimony, House Armed Services Committee hearing "Initial Conclusions Formed by the Defense Strategic Choices and Management Review," Washington, DC, August 1, 2013, available at http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20130801/101242/ HHRG-113-AS00-Wstate-CarterA-20130801.pdf.

[53] Ibid.

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and specifically invoked a number of its concepts, including "smart power" and its approach toward development.[54] State Department officials have suggested that there are no immediate plans to conduct a second QDDR.[55]

Quadrennial Intelligence Community Review (QICR)

In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the national intelligence architecture—like that for homeland security—was overhauled, through legislation and presidential directives.[56] None of this guidance explicitly included a requirement for an intelligence strategy or a formal review, but the advent of the QICR ("quicker" in common parlance) may be considered a reflection of broadly shared interest, post-9/11, in improving the ways in which intelligence supports national security writ large. The lack of an external mandate for the QICR and the classification of most of its outputs may be responsible for the relative lack of attention that has been paid to the QICR, compared to its quadrennial counterparts, in the national security debates.

- **Requirement:** The QICR does not have a statutory mandate, but Congress has shown interest in the possible creation of such a mandate. In its Report on the Intelligence Authorization Act for FY2006, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence recommended that the Director of National Intelligence develop a "formalized, periodic, and structured" quadrennial intelligence review modeled on the QDR.[57] There is also no statutory mandate for a national intelligence strategy (NIS) that might serve as a conceptual umbrella for a more detailed QICR. However, two NISs have been issued in recent years, in 2005 and in 2009, by the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), addressing both mission and organization.[58]

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[54] See Department of State, "Leading through Civilian Power," The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, 2010, available at http://www.state.gov/s/dmr/qddr/. See for example pp. ii, ix, 1, 6.

[55] Interviews with State officials, 2013.

[56] These included four executive orders issued in August 2004: "Establishing the President's Board on Safeguarding Americans' Civil Liberties," "Strengthening the Sharing of Terrorism Information to Protect Americans," "National Counterterrorism Center," and "Strengthened Management of the Intelligence Community," available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/orders/; as well as the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, December 17, 2004 (P.L. 108-458). These changes were informed in part by the recommendations provided in July 2004 by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States ("the 9/11 Commission"), a congressionally mandated, independent, bipartisan panel. See National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, The 9/11 Commission Report, July 2004, available at http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/index.htm.

[57] See H.Rept. 109-101, Intelligence Authorization Act for FY2006, June 2, 2005, to accompany H.R. 2475. The committee further proposed that the review "identify the breadth and depth of the threats, the capabilities existing and needed to combat those threats, and better identify the alignment of resources, authorities, and personnel needed to support those required capabilities." The review would be used, in turn, to help the Director of National Intelligence "develop and periodically adjust a national intelligence strategy." That strategy "would inform the types of information needed to support national priorities and objectives," which in turn would facilitate determination "about which intelligence discipline, or disciplines, can best provide the required information." Those decisions, in turn, "would inform guidance regarding capabilities development and allocation of funding among intelligence disciplines." The act was not enacted.

[58] See Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte, The National Intelligence Strategy of the United States of America, Transformation through Integration and Innovation, October 2005, available at http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nis.pdf; and Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair, The National Intelligence Strategy of the United States of America, August 2009, available at http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Reports%20and%20Pubs/2009_NIS.pdf. The 2005 NIS named 15 objectives, divided between "strategic objectives" and "enterprise objectives," each with subset objectives. It tasked specific offices to craft plans to meet each of the subset objectives. It also noted (continued...)

- **Contents of the mandate:** QICR mandates are not statutory and do not appear to be publicly available. However, the basic quadrennial timeline, and the broad notion of considering the link between strategy and resourcing over a relatively long time frame, follow the basic contours of the QDR.

- **Execution:** QICRs have been conducted in 2001, 2005, and 2009. The first two produced classified outcomes. The third was a scenario-based exercise, looking out to 2025, which considered an array of alternative futures and the missions that would be required to address them. The 2009 QICR unclassified report merely described the scenarios; a separate, classified QICR Final Report reportedly addressed the implications of those scenarios for missions and capabilities.[59]

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that it derived its objectives from the President's NSS, and that its "enterprise-wide objectives derived from" the roughly simultaneous QICR process.

[59] See Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Quadrennial Intelligence Community Review, Scenarios: Alternative Futures the Intelligence Community Could Face, January 2009, available at http://www.fas.org/irp/dni/qicr.pdf.